

**Town of Arlington  
Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)**

Tuesday, February 25, 2003 7:15 PM

Committee members present: Elisabeth Carr-Jones, Teresa DeBenedictis, Ralph Elwell, Larry Englisher, Lt. Jim McHugh, Mike Rademacher, Scott Smith, Ed Starr

Others present: Ed Cuoco and Michael Kessman (Engineering Intern)

**Administrative Items**

The minutes of 1/25 were approved unanimously.

Ed Starr presented a draft write-up on TAC activities for the 2002 Town Book, and asked for any comments within the next few days.

Ralph Elwell arrived at 7:20 PM.

**Zipcar**

Ralph Elwell reported that Larry Slotnick (of ZipCar) has spoken with Alan McClennen. Larry will also be in touch with Fleet Bank about the possibility of a parking space behind the bank in Arlington Center. The ideal is to have 1 private, and 1 public space in that area.

**Spring / Jason Street Intersection**

Next steps are in the hands of David Walkinshaw and Ron Santosuosso. Teresa DeBenedictis reported that Ron is ready to go.

**Pace Car Planning**

Ralph Elwell suggested that "Slow Down for Arlington" might be an improved slogan. The issue is when to roll it out. Town Day (in September 2003) might be a reasonable target.

**Massachusetts Avenue Corridor**

Scott Smith reported on recent and planned discussions, including

- Meeting with Jack Hurd and Kathleen Kiely Dias on 2/15
- Phone conversation with Kevin Greeley on 2/22
- Planned meeting with Charles Lyons and Diane Mahon on 3/1

**Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)**

At a meeting with Ed Starr, Elisabeth Carr-Jones, Scott Smith and Alan McClennen, Alan suggested that a possible funding source for further work on both the Mass. Ave. corridor and the Mass. Ave/ Route 60 intersection would be CDBG, with a request for \$25K for each project. Teresa DeBenedictis noted that a rebate from NSTAR might also be available for moving to LED pedestrian signal heads at Mass Ave / Route 60. The specific requests are as follows:

1. \$25,000 to hire professional assistance to make specific recommendations, and to acquire and install new heads/signs [at the Mass Ave / Route 60 intersection].
2. \$25,000 to facilitate a detailed design and public process for that five-block portion of the Massachusetts Avenue Corridor between Lake/Winter and Varnum Streets. The funds will be used to hire a professional design firm to:
  - facilitate the development of a detailed design, including road width, sidewalk width, lane configuration and pedestrian amenities to create an urban village atmosphere in the area, and
  - facilitate the building of consensus among the various stakeholders, including residents and businesses

There was a brief discussion of whether the \$25K amount was high enough, but general agreement that this was an appropriate amount, especially as we do not know the total CDBG funds that will be available this year. Also, the total of \$50K matches what TAC has received from Town Meeting in previous years. Ed Starr noted that Finance Committee voted no action on this year's warrant article requesting funds for an intern.

The committee voted unanimously that the above two requests be submitted, in lieu of the high visibility crosswalk request that was voted in January.

### **Traffic speed and volume data**

Mike Kessman presented an index of the measured traffic data acquired by the Traffic Division, with preliminary data for speeds and volumes. He departed after this presentation at 7:50 PM.

### **Thermoplastic Crosswalks**

Larry Englisher arrived during this discussion, at 7:55.

Teresa DeBenedictis reported that due to the difficult winter and budget uncertainty, there has been some delay in planning for spring crosswalk painting work. However, she should be able to get pricing next week. A concern with thermoplastic is that adhesion on existing roads is not very good, and it is hopeless over existing paint. She will call Cambridge to see about their experience with thermoplastic on existing roadways. Mike Rademacher offered to furnish some thermoplastic cost information that he has.

Larry Englisher presented a spreadsheet that prioritizes candidate thermoplastic crosswalk locations based on traffic volume, number of pedestrians (using presence of a business, bus stop, or church as proxies), high speed, likelihood of very young/old pedestrians, difficulties with visibility, pedestrian crashes, and other special considerations. Locations were given a score from 0 – 8 based on these criteria, with high pedestrian crash rates being rated as 2 points and the other criteria as one point each. Locations with scores of 6 or above are all along Massachusetts Avenue, and include Academy/Central, Library Way/Water, Bartlett, Marathon, Orvis/Grafton, and Wyman.

Scott Smith suggested that if a trial crosswalk is planned for the Academy / Town Hall / Water Street areas, pedestrian counts should be collected, similar to what was done in East Arlington. Elisabeth Carr-Jones volunteered to coordinate the counting effort.

## **TAC Financial News**

Ed Starr reported that of the \$50K voted by Town Meeting, \$15K has funded the work of Paul Campbell, and about \$7 K will fund the work of Mike Kessman for three months. If there is no spring intern, this will leave about \$28K. Teresa DeBenedictis mentioned that funds voted by a warrant article would carry for three years. Ed also noted that we do have a new warrant article before town meeting. If it were targeted for some very specific items, such as thermoplastic crosswalks, it might be favorably received. Possible uses for the funds (either the \$28 K, or any new funds obtained) might include the following:

- thermoplastic crosswalks
- a trial of a speed hump
- signal improvements at Mass Ave / Route 60
- detailing a DPW person to assist TAC, perhaps at 1/5 time (one day per week). Teresa will e-mail an estimate of the cost for the DPW person per day to Ed Starr. She cautioned that bringing a new college student in at the same time existing people are at risk for layoffs may not be good for morale. Using the funds for an existing employee might be better.

## **Bylaws**

Ed presented draft bylaws for the committee. Reaction was generally favorable, although there was some concern that 5 years may be too long a term. Three years is more typical, although the issues faced by TAC are complex, and it may take more than a year for a new member to become effective. Ralph volunteered to head a bylaw working group.

## **Town Transportation News**

Ed Starr handed out a list of the top 10 TAC priorities, with discussion of the following topics:

1. There was strong support from the committee for the Police Traffic Unit, and the work they have done. Jim McHugh reported that citations have gone up, and crashes seem to have gone down since the unit was established, although it may be too early to tell for sure whether crashes have decreased as a result of the Traffic Unit.
2. Ed Cuoco noted that there was a serious crash near Pleasant and Monadnock in 12/2002. The issue seems to be with northbound traffic and late evening speeding. The committee unanimously recommends that arrow warning signs (MUTCD W1-8) be placed at that curve for northbound traffic.
3. Teresa DeBenedictis suggested one use for TAC funds might be to pay for a Zipcar spot. TAC voted support for this idea, and Ralph Elwell offered to investigate

**The meeting adjourned at 9:45 PM.**

## **Handouts:**

Agenda, draft for 2002 Town Report, bylaw draft, project list, CDBG letter on Pleasant St / Route 60 – from Ed Starr

Minutes from December 18, 2002, CDBG letter on Mass. Ave., crosswalk list – from Scott Smith

Traffic Counts – from Mike Kessman